

Notices of Books.

The Building erected in Hyde Park for the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations, 1851. By CHARLES DOWNES, Architect, and CHARLES COWPER, C.E. London, John Weale. 1852.

So many descriptions of the Exhibition Building have been published, that some readers will, perhaps, ask what occasion there can be for the portly quarto here described. Never was there an event so fully chronicled, never was there a building so minutely described! The present work, nevertheless, stands alone: it consists of 24 large plates by Mr. Downes, from the working drawings of the contractors, with technical descriptions by Mr. Charles Cowper. Besides plans and elevations, the plates give the details of columns, wood trusses, and wrought and cast iron girders, the galleries, roofs, gutters, trusses, in fact, of the whole construction, so that those who desire to erect a similar building, or to apply, without the trouble of thinking for themselves, any of the arrangements used there, may do so.

Every one knows that the dimensions of the building are multiples and sub-multiples of one primary dimension, 24 feet; but what fixed this primary is not so generally known. Mr. Cooper says:—"To facilitate the whole of the operations, they determined to adopt one unit of length throughout the building. It was found that sheet-glass could be procured of the length of 49 inches, but that a greater length would be much more expensive, from the difficulty of blowing and handling such long pieces. Glass of this length, placed on a slope of $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, was found suitable for a ridge and valley roof, in which the pitch on distance from centre to centre of gutters is 8 feet. Three times this pitch, or 24 feet, was considered to be a convenient length for the cast-iron girders, and was, therefore, adopted as the unit of length. The wider avenues were made twice this unit, or 49 feet wide, and the central avenue, or nave, was made three times this unit, or 72 feet wide. We thus see that the difficulty of manufacturing glass of greater length than about 4 feet was the primary cause which determined the dimensions employed throughout the building."

All the plates are very clearly drawn and lithographed.

Ancient Halls of Lancashire. From original Drawings by ALFRED RIMMER, Architect. Liverpool, Deighton; London, Bogue. 1852.

We have here, in a thin quarto, twenty plates, on stone, illustrating a number of the old halls of Lancashire; as, for example, Peel Hall (half timbered); Wardley Hall (the same); Smithell's Hall, a fine panelled dining-room; Hoghton Tower, one of the best of the views; Salmsbury Hall; Rufford Hall, with its bold roof; and others. Salmsbury Hall has a fire-place 14 feet 10 inches wide. One of the purposes of the large fire-places was, according to a family MS. of the Cunliffs, that the young folks could sit and crack nuts and divert themselves, and "in this manner the sons and daughters got matching without going much from home."

There is a quaintness in the writings of early days amusing, and sometimes touching. Take this extract from the diary of one John Ireland, when he was building an old hall in Newton Valley, between Liverpool and Manchester: the date is 1634:—

"Oct. the 13th, 1634.—Aboute bildinge. I did spend the whole of this day . . . Reasonably well spent I this day in sivel outward cariage; but inwardlye I am but worldly minded, could in devotion, and quite could in zeal, too earthly minded and troubled aboute bilding.

16th.—This was our rearinge day, and about this busines I spent this whole day.

17th.—Much troubled with bildinge.

19th.—Sunday, my minde very much disquieted about my bildinge.

24th.—Incumbered very much with my bildinge.

Nov. 11.—Aboute my bildinge I spent all this whole daye: worldlye minded, and my

thoughts are very much entangled about my bildinge.

December 1st.—This morning, after I had said my morninge prayers, I wente to the new bildinge, and there my selfe alone did pray and meditate. &c. The window dressings of this house are enriched with stone diamonds and fleur de lis, coloured black."

Mr. Rimmer's book offers two subjects for regret—1st, that it does not include all the halls in the county; and 2ndly, that through want of previous acquaintance with lithography the drawings are not so effective as they might be. So many ancient buildings, however, have been swept away of which we have no record, that he has our thanks for what he has done.

The British Winter Garden: being a practical Treatise on Evergreens; showing their general Utility in the Formation of Gardens and Landscape Scenery, and their Mode of Propagating, Planting, and Removal, from One to Fifty Feet in Height; as practised at Eleston Castle. By WILLIAM BARRON, Head Gardener. Bradbury and Evans. London, 1852.

The Flower, Fruit, and Kitchen Garden: containing full Directions for the Hothouse, the Greenhouse, and every Branch of Fruit, Flower, and Vegetable Culture. By Practical Gardeners and Florists. Lloyd, London.

The Gardener's Record, and Amateur Florist's Companion. Under superintendence of Mr. J. T. NEVILLE. London, Groombridge. Nos. 1 to 4.

Is the first of these little volumes we have an explanation of all those mechanical and other processes through which the constant verdure and pictorial landscapes of Elvaston have become celebrated; and whereby desired effects may be at once produced by transplantation of trees of nearly all sizes and ages by wholesale, without the necessity of awaiting the slow processes of Nature's gradual adornment by the growth of trees planted only in their infancy. The volume also contains advice as to the species and habits of trees desirable for such purposes, and as to modes of distribution. The author, we observe, contemplates the publication of fifty lithographs from calotype views taken at Elvaston, whenever a sufficient number of subscribers have indicated their desire to possess them.

In the second book of the lot we have, month by month, all that is likely to require attention in the ordinary conduction of gardening operations. The book is cheaply got up, but it contains a good deal of miscellaneous and useful information to all who delight in ornamenting the vicinity of their domiciles with the ever-varying beauties of nature, or wish to do so.

The last of the trio at the head of this notice, is a pleasant and promising cheap serial, which adds, to the practical information it gives, a touch of that sentiment and poetry properly belonging to Nature's pets.

GREAT YARMOUTH.—The association for promoting the prosperity of Great Yarmouth have issued a statement of the objects they have in view, which comprise the establishment of public amusements, such as concerts, instrumental music at promenades, balls, &c.; and also the advocacy of public improvements, as by the suggestion of a public company to erect a promenade pier, extending from Victoria-terrace 650 feet into the sea, or 100 feet beyond the present jetty, so as to allow steamers to land passengers; the formation of a public promenade and carriage-drive from Victoria-terrace to Britannia-terrace, with approaches from the town and the beach; the widening of the jetty entrance, and throwing open of a large space in a semi-circular form, with carriage-ways and footpaths; the improvement of the Chapel dunes, waste grounds, rope walks, and quay; sanitary improvement of the town, &c. A subscription list for publication is in course of formation in aid of the funds of the association, of which Mr. A. Gourlay is the treasurer.

Miscellaneous.

NORWICH CATHEDRAL.—Various alterations and improvements have been made, and are still going on, in this cathedral, according to the local papers. The choir galleries have been removed, and about two-thirds of either transept thrown into the choir, and separated by screens. The floor of the choir had been lowered about 18 inches to its original level, which allows the carved work of the benches to be seen, forming a rise of two steps eastward of the tower. The open archways from the aisles to the transepts have been filled in with stone screens of a perpendicular character—the panels filled with plate glass. In the south aisle a small Norman arch recessed is to be filled with stained glass, by Wailes, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, as a memorial window. Two new stained windows have been recently inserted, one in the north aisle, in memory of the late Professor Smyth, by Warrington, of London; the other in the south aisle, in memory of a Mr. and Mrs. Hale, by Wailes. It is hoped that several other windows in the cathedral will be similarly filled with stained glass, which are now blocked up with masonry. St. Luke's Chapel has been restored to its original Norman character. The north aisle, next the Bishop's garden, has been renovated similarly to St. Luke's Chapel. The architect who has had the management and superintendence of all these improvements is Mr. John Brown, of Norwich.

EASTCHEAP.—Just now the neighbourhood of Eastcheap furnishes plenty of matter for remark. The end of St. Mary-at-Hill Church having been laid bare, presents some stone ornaments very different from the rest of the church, which at some time or other has been stuccoed over stone. A little way further down Love-lane, on the right-hand side, is an old mansion, built by Sir Christopher Wren, which has just been purchased for the Ward School. One room on the ground floor is covered with curious old panel paintings. The church of St. George, Botolph-lane, ought to be visited at the same time. It has just been discovered that within a foot of the flooring of the church are numbers of bodies and remains, and something is about to be done. In the vault is to be seen a mummy, or rather the body of a woman, (so it is said) quite brown and hard, which is put in a sort of box upright—*pro bono* pew-opener.—A NEIGHBOUR.

CONDITION OF THE WORKING CLASSES.—In the House of Commons, on 11th inst. Mr. Slaney moved,—"That it is expedient that a department standing committee, or unpaid commission, be appointed to consider, suggest, and report from time to time preventive and remedial measures to benefit the social condition of the working classes, and for removing social and other obstacles to their improvement." He entered at some length into the subject, at first in the face of a little impatient on the part of members present; and after various speakers had addressed the House for and against the appointment of such a commission as that proposed, of which Mr. Walpole, on the part of the Government, disapproved, the motion was negatived without a division.

CONTEMPLATED DESTRUCTION OF OLD VERULAM.—In reply to the notice in our pages of Mr. C. R. Smith's remarks on this subject, the 'National Freehold Land Society,' who have purchased the site, state in their Circular that "the only part of the allusion that applies is, that the land has been purchased for the members; but as the tenancy of the present occupier will not expire until more than twelve months hence, we think we may safely assert that the land has not been 'marked out for excavations for houses,' at least not by us; and as to the contemplated destruction of the ruins which the writer so pathetically deplores, we can only say that we have not contemplated anything of the sort, for the best of all possible reasons, namely, that until we have possession we have no power to touch them." We cannot say much for the logic of the reply, but have reason to believe it augurs a good intention.